INTRODUCTION TO BRITISH & AMERICAN CULTURE & SOCIETY

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Objectives of the course

• General knowledge of culture & society of the UK & the US (understand & evaluate)
• High-order thinking skills: analysis, synthesis, explanation, comparison, critical thinking,…
• Teamwork & presentation skills
• Attitudes: sense of self-discipline, self-directed learning, active learning, cultural sensitivity, cultural tolerance,…..
Course requirements

MID-TERM SCORE (30%)
- Punctuality, participation & class contribution + Groupwork and 2 group presentations (50%)
- 2 Mini-tests/Quizzes (50%)

FINAL SCORE (70%)
- Part 1: British culture (50%)
- Part 2: American culture (50%)
Syllabus – Part 1 (British culture)

W1: Introduction: - What is „Culture“?
  - Characteristics & components of culture
  The physical setting of British Civilization (group 1)
W2+3. The historical setting of British Civilization (group 2)
W4. The people and society (religions, tradition, festivals, food/drinks/clothing, housing...) (group 3)
W5. The British legacy, political system
  Welfare (group 4)
W6. The British system of education (group 5)
W7. The British media, arts, (GROUP 6)
  Sports & Entertainment of the UK (GROUP 7)
W8. Quiz 1/minitest 1 + students presentations
Syllabus – Part 2 (American culture & society)

W9. The physical setting of the USA (group 1)
W10. The historical setting of the USA (group 2)
W11. The people & the political system (group 3)
W12. The US system of education (group 5)
   Business & economy (group 4)
W13. The American society (media, arts, religions, festivals, food/drinks/clothing...) group 6
   Sports & Entertainment of the USA (group 7)
W14. Quiz 2/ Minitest 2 – students’ presentations
Reference 1: British culture

1. Mc Dowall, D. *Britain in close-up*, Longman, 1999
4. Gargood, C. *Aspects of Britain & the USA*, OUP, 1992

- [http://www.britainexpress.com/History/english-culture.htm](http://www.britainexpress.com/History/english-culture.htm)
Other websites on British culture

- http://www.britishcouncil.org/
- http://www.bbc.co.uk/
- http://www2.rgu.ac.uk/publicpolicy/introduction/society.htm (ok)
- www.users.globalnet.co.uk
- http://www.ukstudentlife.com/Britain.htm (good)
- http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/al/learning_english/activities/aez/resources/british_culture/ (ok)
- http://www.greatbritishlife.co.uk/ (ok)
- http://www.learnenglish.de/culture/foodculture.htm (ok)
- http://british-culture.com/ (ok)
Reference 2: American culture

4. Gargood, C. *Aspects of Britain & the USA*, OUP, 1992

9. *American Identities* (optional)
Group 1 & 2 (2-3 things you know about the UK or the US)

- Religion (Christianity)
- Entertainment
- Arts
- Festivals
- Economy
- Cuisine, eating, drinking
- Clothing
- Lifestyles, practices, behaviors,...
- Social organisations
- Sports
- Law,
- Politics
- Language
- Transportation
- Science & technology
- Architecture
- Education
Group 3 & 4

- A Complex of customs, beliefs, morals, values,...
- Stability: passed down from generation to generation
- Accepted by the community/shared by the group (the group can receive & filter the new things,...)

- Created by Human beings
- Physical & mental things
- Visible & invisible things
- The ways of life....
What is culture? - Brainstorming

Culture & civilization?

- Food, drinks, clothes, housing
- Language, arts (music, literature, sculpture, architecture,...)
- Entertainment, sports, media
- Religions, beliefs, values, customs, habits, morals, traditions, lifestyles, behaviors, ideals, practices (Way of thinking, feeling, believing,...)
- Economy, Business, Science & technology, Methods, skills
- Civilization?
- Social vs individual
- Society, Law, politics, family, education (organization)
- External environment
- History
- Geography
Remarks on Culture

• Complex (so many aspects), dynamic, continuous
• Visible & invisible things (underlying, deep, subtle) - iceberg
• Human life is touched & altered by culture (way of living, systems are organized & function)
• Culture is knowledge, beliefs and behaviour shared by a group of people (share language, communication style, customs, beliefs /perspectives, attitudes & values): symbolic
• Transferred from generations to generations (learned, cross-generational, adaptive, integrated)
The attitudes we should have

• Be open to accept differences
• Avoid cultural stereotypes (positive or negative), avoid „all, no, always, never“
• Be slow in making judgements (difference between personal & cultural behaviours)
• Be ready to learn from miscommunication (opportunity for culture learning)
• Be sensitive, adaptive, ready to learn (education & observation)
Characteristics of culture

• Complicated: a system with interrelated components
• Value-based: material & spiritual values, cultural identity
• Humanity (created by human beings)
• Stability (long or short history)
Functions

• Organization
• Development
• Communication
• Education
3 important components

• Space (geography)
• Time (history)
• People (create things/values, organize society, communicate with people, behave towards others, adapt themselves to social & physical environments)
The reasons for learning culture & society

• Good understanding for communication
• Opportunities to use the language more accurately (build up confidence)
• Know how to behave appropriately when communicating with the native speakers of English
• Social & cultural competence for a global citizen
• Improve soft skills
• .....
Contents

• What is culture?
• A short video clip
• The physical setting of British Civilization
  - The UK – Main divisions
  - Climate – Rivers & lakes
  - Geography
Quiz for review
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Know</th>
<th>Want to know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Pop music (The Beatles)....</td>
<td>• Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The Queen &amp; royal family</td>
<td>• Food, drinks, clothes, housing, table manners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Shakespeare</td>
<td>• History, geography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Like talking about the weather</td>
<td>• Power of the Queen &amp; PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Architecture</td>
<td>• Religions....</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• ...........</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Group 1: Know & want to know about the geography of the UK

Know
• Isolated big island
• NW of Europe
• 4 Nations
• Longitude: 0 ?
• The Thames river flows through London

Want to know
• Weather, seasons ?
• The highest mountain?
• Famous sightseeing places/tourist attractions ?
• Natural resources ?
• Longest rivers
Overview of the U.K.

- Great Britain, Britain, the UK?
- Great Britain - is made up of England, Scotland, and Wales
- The United Kingdom (UK) is both Great Britain, i.e., England, Scotland, and Wales, and Northern Ireland.
- There is no difference between the names Great Britain and Britain.
Background

• English (specifically England) =/= British (generally Great Britain)
• United Kingdom: England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland
• Britain = England, Scotland, and Wales
• National Flag = England (St. George) + Scotland (St. Andrew) + Ireland (St. Patrick)
• British Isles: the UK + 5,000 islands off NW coast
The UK flag

- The British (UK) flag - sometimes called the Union Jack – is made up from three other flags
- England 50,714,000
- Wales 2,977,000
- Scotland 5,108,000
- Northern Ireland 1,733,000
Geographical position

Vietnam – in SE Asia

The UK – in NW Europe
Compare VN & the UK

**Vietnam**
- **Area**: 331,690 km²
- **Population**: 86,025,000
- **Density**: 260/km² – Lai Chau lowest density (41/km²).

**The UK**
- **Area**: 244,800km²
- **Population**: 61,610,000
- **Density**: 251/km² – Scotland lowest density (64/km²).
Major Cities of VN & the UK

**Major cities/provinces of Vietnam**

- Hanoi (north): the Capital - 6,472,200
- HCMC (South): largest – 7,165,200
- Nghe An (north): 2,919,200 people
- Dong Nai (south) : 2,491,300 people
- An Giang (Mekong Delta-south): 2,149,200 people

**Major cities of the UK**

- London - Britain’s largest city, the capital 7,620,000 people
- Birmingham 1,010,000
- Glasgow (Scotland) 640,000
- Edinburgh (Scotland) 450,000
- Liverpool and Manchester 400,000 each
- Belfast (Northern Ireland) has 280,000 people
- Cardiff (Wales) has 270,000

General statistics office- www.gso.gov.vn
Compare 2 largest cities

HCM CITY
- Area: 2,095.5 km²
- Population: 7,165,200
- Density: 3,419/km²

LONDON
- Area: 1,580 km²
- Population: 7,620,000
- Density: 4,860/km²
Geography of the UK

• The British Isles: GB & Ireland
• Compromise: lack of extremes (not too high mountains / not too big rivers / not too cold / not too hot weather...)
• Land: no active volcanoes
  – South: mostly low-lying land with hills and agricultural land
  – North: mostly covered in moorland/grassland and mountains.
• Weather: The climate is temperate but fairly wet throughout the year
• Temperature: around 5 - 18 °C (average)
Topography
-Southeast: Lowlands, low-lying (flat plains, rolling hills, drier & sunnier, deep & rich soil, woods, agriculture, densely populated, green fields, quiet rivers, abundant vegetation)
-Northwest: Highlands, mountainous areas (old hard rocks, cool, wet, cloudy, mineral resources, thin soil, moorland for sheep, uncultivated, lightly populated, lakes) Ben Nevis 1,343m), Pennine Range (backbone) -Forests, grassland, green belts, agriculture Fisheries, forestry

Industrialization:
6 industrial areas are: around London, Liverpool, Leeds, Manchester, Birmingham, Newcastle (Coal & iron mines, electricity, electronics, chemistry, ship-building)
Oil production, transport, communication
-Smog (smoke & fog)
- Water pollution (River Thames, Law passed in 1970s)
-Cars: air & noise pollution
Sunshine & rainfall

- **Temperature** – the south is warmer than the north.
- **Precipitation** – the west and north-west, and more specifically the mountains in these areas are wetter than the lowlands of the east.
- **Wind** – the north and west is in general windier than the south and east, but it is less windy inland than on the coasts, and less windy in low-lying areas than on the tops of hills and mountains.
Weather (Temperature: from -10°C to 32°C)

- Mild, temperate climate
- More rain in the west, changable weather, from day to day, hour to hour (same day: snow, rain, fog, sunshine)
- Winter: colder in the east, Summer: warmer, sunnier in the south
Rainfall

(1,600 mm in mountains NW – 800 mm central & east)
Summary of temperature and rainfall around Britain

- **North:** Temperatures in the north of England tend to be lower than in the south. The further south you go the warmer it gets.

- **Northeast:**
  Northeast England, is the coolest in the country. Relatively dry all year.

- **NorthWest:**
  Cool summers, mild winters, heavy rain.

- **South:**
  Southern England offer the best weather with mild winters. The south coast of England is the sunniest part of the country.

- **Southeast:**
  Southeast has more temperature variations with warmer summers and cooler winters.

- **SouthWest:**
  Warm summers, mild winters, rain all year especially winter

- **East:** East has less rainfall.

- **West:** Warm summers, mild winters, heavy rain. Most rain falls over the mountains in the west, especially Snowdonia in Wales and the Scottish Highlands
Why is there a variation of weather in different parts of Britain?

• The reason for Britain's weather being different North, South, East and West is because different air masses (wind) come from each direction as follows:
  • North wind - Arctic very cold (arctic: Bắc Cực)
  • East wind - Continental from Europe and Asia. The winds are cold and dry.
  • South wind - Tropical warm.
  • West wind - Maritime air has crossed Atlantic bringing cloud and rain. The winds are warm and wet. (maritime: thuộc biển, hàng hải)
## Vietnam weather

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Hanoi (North)</th>
<th>Danang (Centre)</th>
<th>Saigon (South)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Av.Temp (C)</td>
<td>Av. rainfall (mm)</td>
<td>Av.Temp (C)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>22</td>
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<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>18</td>
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<td>22</td>
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<td>March</td>
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<td>April</td>
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<td>May</td>
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<td>July</td>
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<td>August</td>
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<td>October</td>
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<td>November</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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[http://www.google.com.vn/imgres]
Identify rivers and lakes of the British Isles

This game asks you to identify the rivers and lakes in this map. When you click on the Start button, the names will disappear, and you will have to replace them by selecting the correct name when asked.

Start game

Return to rivers and seas index

Facts about these rivers and lakes
Facts about these rivers and lakes
(Game: http://gwydir.demon.co.uk/jo/maps/ukrivers/index.htm)

• The **Thames** flows through Oxford, Reading, Windsor and London.

• The **Severn** flows through Shrewsbury, Worcester, and Gloucester. It is the longest British river.

• **Loch Ness** is the largest Scottish loch (or lake) by volume. Loch Ness is very deep and is famous for the Loch Ness monster or Nessie.

• The **Lake District** is an area of mountains and lakes in England. It is a National Park.

• **Loch Neagh**: biggest in NIreland
Ports, coastline, forest, flora & fauna

- Plymouth, Exmouth, Portsmouth
- Length of coast line: 2,350 miles
- Canals, waterway
- Forest: 5%, orchards, hedges,
- Wood: Oak, pine....
- Wolves, foxes, hares, rabbits, squirrels, birds, pigeons,....
Main divisions: 4 nations

1. Scotland
2. Northern Ireland
3. North West
4. North East
5. Wales
6. Midlands
7. East Anglia
8. South West
9. South East
England & Wales

England - a highly diverse topography

Scotland

ROSE

THISTLE
LONDON (about 1/6 Total population of England)

• Central & suburbs
• Cultural & racial variety
• Tourism & finance
• West End (theaters, cinemas, shops,...)
• East End (poor, Cockney, immigrants)
• Commuters
Southern England

- Kent „garden of England“
- Hills, white cliffs of the south coasts
- Trading, service (little heavy industry)
- East Anglia (NE of London): rural, flat
Midland of England

• Birmingham (car production), Derby (engineering), Leicester, Nottingham: large industrial areas,
• also farming
• east coast: fishing
• Cool, wetter than in the South
• Place of interest: Stratford-on-Avon, Coventry
Northern England

- Manchester (west): Cotton
- Leeds (east): wool
- Sheffield: steel goods
- Newscastle: ship-building
- Wetter in the west, snow in winter
- Places of interest: Roman Wall, Durham, York, Chester
Scotland

- Southern upland: sheep farming
- North: central plain
- Highlands: mountains, deep valleys, small islands off the west coast
- Tourism, whisky, North sea oil industry (N E)
- Glasgow (third largest city): heavy industry + artistic heritage
- Edinburgh (capital, scholarship, law, administration
- national dress (kilt), bagpipes, accent & intonation, religion, landscape, winter sport
Wales & Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland

Wales
Wales & N. Ireland

Wales (emblem: leek)

• SE of the UK
• South Wales: Coal mines
• Cardiff (capital): industrial villages
• The rest: mountainous
• Mount Snowdown: beautiful, largest National Park of Britain
• High rainfall in western mountains, east: dry

Northern Ireland

• Belfast: linen, ship-building
• Largely agricultural
• Natural beauty
• Rock in North coast
Review: Quiz

1. Great Britain is not made up from
   A. England
   B. Scotland
   C. Wales
   D. Northern Ireland
The British flag is popularly known as
A. Jack Union
B. Jack United
C. Union Jack
D. Union Jacky
3. **What is the population of the UK?**

A. about 80 million
B. about 60 million
C. about 30 million
D. about 40 million
4. What is the name of the river that flows through London?

- ? The Thames
- ? The Seine
- ? Heathrow
- ? The Loch Ness
- ? Severn
5. What is the highest mountain in the UK?
   A. St Michael’s Mount
   B. Ben Nevis
   C. Cader Idris
   D. Mount Snowdon

6. Which areas of the United Kingdom have the most rainfall?
   A. North west
   B. North east
   C. South west
   D. South east
7. Diverse West Midlands town in the heart of England:
   A. London
   B. Birmingham
   C. Bristol
   D. Cardiff

8. Which county is called 'the garden of England'?
   A. Kent
   B. Cornwall
   C. Devon
   D. Nottinghamshire?
9. You are at a famous lake in Scotland. What are you looking for?

Loch Ness Monster
Extra questions

10. What is the winter like in Britain?
   a) Cool
   b) Mild
   c) Hot

11. Annual precipitation average is higher in?
   a) The Isle of Man
   b) The South
   c) The North
What are the Geographic Facts of the UK?
(Reference Website:Britain Project)

• **Location:** Western Europe, islands including the northern one-sixth of the island of Ireland between the North Atlantic Ocean and the North Sea, northwest of France

• **Geographic coordinates:** 54 00 N, 2 00 W

• **Map references:** Europe

• **Area:** total: 244,820 sq km
  water: 3,230 sq km
  note: includes Rockall and Shetland Islands
  land: 241,590 sq km

• **Area - comparative:** slightly smaller than Oregon

• **Land boundaries:** total: 360 km

• **border countries:** Ireland 360 km

• **Coastline:** 12,429 km
• The UK lies between the North Atlantic Ocean and the North Sea

• comes within 35 km (22 miles) of the northwest coast of France, from which it is separated by the English Channel

• Northern Ireland shares a 360 km international land boundary with the Republic of Ireland

• The Channel Tunnel bored beneath the English Channel, now links the UK with France.
The UK is bordered by four seas:

- to the south by the **English Channel**, which separates it from continental Europe
- to the east by the **North Sea**
- to the west by the **Irish Sea** and the **Atlantic Ocean**

The Land: The UK Landscape is very varied,
• Scotland and Wales are the most mountainous parts of the UK. A ridge of hills, the Pennine
• Many coastal areas are low-lying, (east and south of England.
• Most of the UK is made up of gently rolling hills
• Northern Ireland is also home to the UK's largest lake, Lough Neagh, which covers an area of 396sq.km (153 sq miles).
**Homework:**
- Britain Project website
- Preparation: History of the UK
- Compare 1 aspect of history, (VN-the UK)
Reference for British history

- Britain: Chapter 2 (p.15-30) History
- Aspects of Britain & the UK: Chapter 2-British history (p20)
- Illustrated history of Britain
- Britainproject website: www.projectbritain.com
Group presentation (max. 30 mins)

• Quiz form: multiple choice, T/F, gap-filling, matching, short answers,…(20)
• Giving hints or suggestions if possible (mention the page, chapter, materials, website address,…)
• Summary
• Optional: comparison of some cultural features between the UK & VN
Thank you for your attention!
Questions ?